

— An Essay —
On Dysmenorrhœa,
Respectfully Submitted
To the Faculty
Of the
Homœopathic Medical College
Of
Pennsylvania,
On the
Thirty-first Day
Of January,
Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-four,
By
Cornelius B. Compton
Of Salem
New Jersey.

Jan. 31st 1854.

I am pleased with what
you say about the distribution of the
various species. More difficult will
be the actual mission of
describing them, from the way
in which they vary profusely.
~~The~~^{This} usual amount is greatly
exceeded in quantity, so much
so as to constitute but a poor
specimen for a "show"; even this scanty
amount may be completely suppressed
for a length of time, from, and
again make off appearance by
degrees or less, and only to be
suppressed.

The difficulty may be ex-
aggerated, but surely not frequently
however, it failing with several speci-

Difficult or painful menstruation
is a form of abnormal menstruation that
is known by pain more or less severe,
in either the secretion or emission of
the monthly discharge from the uterus,
which may be very profuse, of
about the usual amount, or greatly
diminished in quantity; so much
so as to constitute but a poor
apology for a "show"; even this scanty
emission may be completely suppressed
for a longer or shorter time, and
again make its appearance for
a greater or less extent, only to be
re-suppressed.

The difficulty may be ex-
perienced but once, more frequently
however it returns at several men-

-ual periods, and sometimes it last for many years.

The pain and constitutional symptoms differ widely in different individuals, and also in the same individuals under different circumstances.

The attendant symptoms of dysmenorrhoea, are in general, bearing down pains in the region of the uterus, similar to labor pains, incessant aching in the lumber region, pelvis, and extremities; accelerated action of the heart, cheeks flushed, headache, pains in the abdomen of a pressing cutting character, spasmodic pains in the gastric region, irritability with oppression of the chest, scanty elimina-

- tion of non-coagulable blood con-
- taining lymph membranous shreds
or clots of dark colored blood.

This abnormal condition of
the catamenia will, probably in
all cases be found dependent on
or resulting from one or more
of the following causes viz.
Puralgia, Inflammation or
Mechanical obstruction.

Puralgia of the uterus may be
incident to all ages, but certainly
is most common after the age of
thirty years, and is most likely
to occur in those who have never
borne children. It is likewise almost
exclusively confined to those females
who are of a thin delicate habit
with whom the nervous temperament

predominates. The menses are attended with all the concomitant characteristics of neuralgia.

Dr. Oberle in his practice says that it is very frequently dependent on a rheumatic condition of the Uterus.

In a case that occurred in his practice, the connection between rheumatism and dysmenorrhea he concludes was strikingly illustrated.

The patient of an irritable and sanguinous habit, was subject to rheumatic pain in the left, and sometimes in the right ankle joint, which often continued for several weeks.

For more than five years she observed that whenever she felt the pain in the joint at the menstrual period, she menstruated with little

or no difficulty; but when the period returned while the ankle was free from pain, she invariably suffered exruciatingly during the very sparing and hancient flow of the menses.

The most usual cause of dysmenorrhœa is an inflammatory condition of the uterus or its appendages; and will almost invariably be found attacking those who are plethoric and fanciful, who indulge in the luxuries of the table, such as coffee, wine, cordials, &c and who are fond of Theatrical exhibitions & performances, spending the day in the warm, badly ventilated parlor, perusing the light literature of the day which, at best, is only —

calculated to pervert the intellect, heat
the imagination, and set on fire
the baser passions of their nature.

Really it is not surprising that
the uterine functions should become
impaired, when we consider that
the iron law of fashion, the customs
of the times impose such enormous
burdens on the delicate female par-
ticularly in what is known in
common parlance as refined socie-
ty, or forsooth among the aristocracy
especially of large cities.

The fond mother, desirous that
her promising daughter be reared in
accordance with the requisitions of
elegance and symmetry (which is in fact
the most unreal that could be imagined)

with a chest distorted to suit precisely
this abominable code of fashions,
instead of those beautiful proportions
which an otherwise creator conferred upon
her, incarcerates her in buckram
and corset boards, pressing the viscera
of the abdomen, rudely down upon
the pelvic viscera, crowding them into
half the space Providence designed
that they should occupy, or literally
pressing them out of their neat though
sufficiently spacious habitation;
and the thoracic viscera cramped
up to such a degree that the respi-
ratory organs are absolutely deranged
beyond the possibility of recovery;
all this must be endured in order to form
a wasp-like waist to meet the requirements

of a so-called gentility.

Compared with these requisitions
the organs of respiration, digestion
and generation are not deemed worthy
of consideration in perfecting this
straight-jacket system.

It is exceedingly strange that
no more of these unfortunate creatures
are compelled to wear a strait-jacket,
under somewhat different circumstan-
ces and for other purposes.

Our heavenly Father made the
human body of exactly the proper
proportions for the healthful exercise
of all its functions, and in conformity
with the laws of nature the untutored and
savage mother, guided as it were by
instinct leaves these functions to

Their unmolested action, and consequent
-ly is a total stranger to all the
functional derangements of the genital or-
-gans, and bears her offspring com-
-paratively free from pain: while
the prudent civilized Mother compounds
as it were the designs of her creator
by artificial means, and makes of
her daughter an artificial thing, looked
upon as a specimen of elegant
gentility: whose functions are des-
-tined to incessant derangements,
and obnoxious to an innumerable
host of diseases. Such as amenorrhoea,
dysmenorrhœa, muorrhœa, leucorrhœa,
chlorosis, Constipation, Consumption, and
organic disease of the heart, with all their
attendant evils; & displacements of the

Wooing and to the propagation of
her species with excruciating agony,
or even death itself.

The innocent Maid being
thus cheated out of her normal pro-
portions, by a mother devoted to
fashion, rather than the permanent
welfare of her daughter, it is thought
advisable to consummate her education
by shutting her up within the walls
of a boarding-school: here she
must have her mind taxed to the
utmost with all the branches of
an ordinary English education,
in addition to these she must study
Greek, Latin, German, & French, painting
drawing, Music and dancing, but
must reject wit, mirth and physical

exercise in the open air as something beneath her dignity, and fit only for those who may be less fortunate and more in humbler spheres.

Now her education is finished, her form, beautifully unnatural, her countenance magnificently pale and deathlike. Thus she is prepared for the ~~strenuous~~ ^{difficult} studies and responsibilities of real life in a bustling world of fashions, and for her share of the pain and anguish consequent upon such a continuous course of folly.

Another cause of dysmenorrhoea will be found to be Mechanical obstruction, either congenital or otherwise, of the vagina or neck of the womb.

The usual States or conditions under which the mechanical class of causes will be found are, abnormal local positions of the organs such as, retroflexion, anteflexion, retroversion, anteversion and polipus uteri; and congenital constriction of the neck of the womb, diminutive or imperforate os fundus, constriction of the vagina and an imperforate hymen.

Whether the diminution or narrowing of the caliber be congenital or the result of inflammation Churchill thinks it difficult to determine, but that they do exist is incontrovertible.

The major part of this variety of causes is doubtless traceable directly or indirectly to either neuralgia or rheumatism, for their real source or origin,

For instance the fibrous structure or the lining or mucous membrane of the neck of the womb taking on violent inflammation, might thereby become crisped or thickened and result in a material diminution of the calibre of the organ.

The vagina also may be constricted by means of ulcerations or scars resulting from inflammation and sloughing, or the passage may be almost if not entirely obliterated from adhesion of its walls.

An imperforate hymen is of course a congenital malformation, as also occlusion of the mouth of the womb may be.

We therefore conclude that dysmenorrhoea as a consequence of mechanical obstruction, cannot in all

Cases be cured by mechanical means, such as dilating with the bougie or perforating or cutting, because the constriction may be caused and sustained by inflammation, which must be subdued by homopathic medicinal agents. if nature proves to be inadequate to the task of throwing it off herself.

Dr. McTosh gave the results of twenty-seven cases, of dysmenorrhoea caused directly by mechanical obstruction of the os uteri, that came into his hands twenty-four of which he says were cured by the introduction of bougies.

There being no data in his cases from which to prove that the menses were suppressed or retained as they must have

been if the caliber had been so small as barely to admit, as he said, ^{of the introit}, of a bristle. The probability is that, the majority of the twenty four cases he reported as cured had simply the obstruction removed, and that he, properly speaking, did not intend to convey the idea that the dilatation of the os uteri had remedied so great a proportion of cases. For want of such evidence in the matter, and considering that several other authors refer to cases treated by themselves, where the constriction was entirely removed while the dismenorrhoea remained the same, ~~except~~ in one or two cases, we conclude that painful menstruation

depends upon other causes, in the most of this class of cases, notwithstanding they exist in connection with a constricted condition of the calibre.

Causes of dysmenorrhœa.

It is somewhat difficult to give, in all cases, the cause of dysmenorrhœa; but the symptoms will usually indicate some one of the pathological conditions we have already enumerated.

Exposure to cold and wet, miscarriages, and premature confinement, are among the principal exciting causes. It will generally be found that dysmenorrhœa discovers itself through one or more of the causes enumerated, notwithstanding it may be produced by a combination of causes.

Diagnosis.

The diagnosis of dysmenorrhœa in most cases is easily made out, from the fact that the symptoms of the functional derangement are well defined.

In the inflammatory varieties the condition of the uterus may easily be made out by examinations with the speculum and fingers, through the vagina and rectum.

In cases of congestion and distension of the uterus, an accurate diagnosis will be absolutely necessary, from the fact that the patient's character may be ruined by a little ignorance or inadvertency on the part of the medical attendant.

To mistake the membrane thrown off in spurious abortion for the true decidua would be an unpardonable blunder, and would justly blast the reputation of the practitioner, if by any means it should be discovered, and made public. In reference to this subject Dr. Montgomery says, "The substance expelled in this disease will be found to be deficient in several of the properties of the true decidua; for although produced in the uterus by an action analogous to that by which it prepares the decidual midamentum for the reception and support of the ovum, it differs therefrom in two essential points; first, that it is a morbid product; and

Secondly, that not being intended,
like the true decidua, to become an
organ, or at least a medium of
nutrition for the ovum, it is not
furnished with a structure such as
would only be required for the per-
formance of such an office; hence,
it is thin, flimsy, and very unsub-
stantial in its texture; of dirty-white
color or yellowish appearance when
slightly agitated in water, devoid
of the soft, rich, pulpy appearance,
deep vascular color, and numerous
foramina for the reception of the nu-
-trient vessels from the uterus, which
are always so distinctly observable
in the true decidua, which however in
one point it resembles, having its

inner surface smooth, and the outer unequal, but of a ragged and shredy appearance, unlike that of the healthy uterine decidua, and it is, moreover, entirely destitute of the little cotyledonous sacci, already described as an essential charackr in the latter structure.

In texture, it more nearly resembles that of the reflexa than any other structure; but no trace of the transparent membrane of the ovum can be discovered within, or attached to it. And should it happen to come away entire, in the form of a hollow triangular bag, we never find within it a duplicature of itself, forming an inner pouch or reflex layer, as in the case of natural decidual envelopes of the ovum."

Prognosis.

The prognosis is favorable, notwithstanding they may be severe and tedious, in all cases of the neuralgic form, and likewise those that are the result of a gouty or rheumatic condition of the system.

In cases of mechanical obstruction, as for instance abnormal local positions or displacements of the uterus, constriction, coarctation &c. it will depend upon the practicability or non-practicability of an operation, in view of the fact that it may result in peritoneal inflammation, where it is the result of anteversion and retroversion it is easily relieved, and the termination will be satisfactory.

If the case depend for its existence upon inflammation, it will give way to the appropriate Homœopathic remedies, more or less readily, according to the degree and extent of the inflammation

Treatment.

We have already referred to the appropriate treatment for mechanical obstruction. If there should be an undue degree of sensitiveness or soreness after, and consequent upon the operations, an application of dilute tincture of arnica or calendula, or the internal administration of arnica will prevent further trouble. The cases resulting from neuralgia and inflammation, have frequently been relieved by sexual intercourse and giving birth to children; and the

cessation of the menses, at the approach of advanced life, familiarly known as the "turn of life" of necessity must arrest this form of difficulty. Under all circumstances those afflicted with dysmenorrhoea should avoid stimulants, highly seasoned food, and undue exposure to extremes of heat and cold, and observe regularity in all things, and take plenty of exercise in the open air.

The most appropriate medicinal agents recommended in dysmenorrhoea are to be found in the following catalogue, viz.
 Aconite, Carbonate of ammonia, Belladonna, Bryonia,
 Carbonate of Lime, Chamomilla, Coffee, Crocus, Coccus,
 Graphites, Ignatia, Nux Vomica, Phosphorus, Platina,
 Pulsatilla, Decale, Sepia, Sulphur.

In neuralgic cases the remedies are,

Amon. carb. Where there is pain in the loins before or during the catamenia, with pressure on the uterus, drawing in the back, and a disposition to occupy the reclining posture,

Belladonna. Where there is congestive enlargement of the uterus, prolapsus uteri, menstrual spasms, just before the catamenia, with drawing labor-like pains from the loins, with pressing down towards ^{the} genitals, Catamenia too copious and too early, & too pale, colic preceding the catamenia, with great fatigue, loss of appetite, and confused sights or if the catamenia are accompanied by nocturnal perspiration on the chest, with frequent yawning, shivering, with pre-cordial anxiety. Spasmodic pains in the sacrum and back, numbness of the legs

when seated, and pressure on the rectum; or if there be congestion in the head or chest. Heat in the head, with pulsative pain, redness, and fulness of the face. —

Chamomilla. — Is especially indicated if there be sympathetic swelling of the breasts, catamenia suppressed; with pressive pains in the pit of the stomach and abdomen, towards the genitals, as if from labor pains, colic before and during the menses.

Occulus. — Is applicable in females of a mild plethoric or bilious temperament, who are unmarried, or have not borne children, menstrual colic, with cramps in the uterus, premature and painful catamenia, with serous leucorrhœa in the interval. Oculus will be peculiarly applicable if the symptoms just enumerated are aggravated from sleep, conversa-

-tion, eating, and drinking especially coffee.
Coffee. - If there be violent agitation, tears, cries, tossing, and discouragement, during the paroxysms of pain.

Signtia. In sensitive females of a nervous temperament; especially if the menses occur too early and too profuse, with cramp-like and compressive pains in the region of the uterus, heat, heaviness, and pain in the head, colic, and contractive pains, anxiety, palpitation of the heart, and sighing respiration, with sadness and concealed sorrow; it is also useful if pressure and lying on the back mitigate the pain, or if there is a purulent and corrosive leucorrhoea.

Nux vomica. - Catamenia too profuse, premature, and of too long duration, with pressive pains in the hypogastrium, and spasms in the uterus.

nausia with faintness, especially in the morning; rheumatic pains in the limbs, great fatigue; pain in the loins, as if bruised; constipation with sensation of contraction in the anus; colic, with cramp-like pains in a full distended abdomen; ineffectual desire to urinate, with burning pain in the neck of the bladder; heaviness, pressure and sensation of expansion in the head, with vertigo; mix is especially indicated if the above symptoms occur in females of a lively, choleric or sanguineous temperament with black eyes, and hair, or a bilious, dry, and meagre, or lymphatic, feeble and exhausted constitution.

Crocodiles.—Stagnation in the venæ portæ system, producing a full congested state

of the uterine vessels, particularly in young girls; rheumatic pains in the limbs with great weakness, ademous swelling of the feet and legs.

Inflammatory class of cases,

Aconite.—Inflammatory condition of the uterus or ovaries, with violent fever, dry and burning heat, violent thirst for cold drinks, redness and heat in the face; distension of the abdomen with tenderness to touch; rapid respiration, menses too abundant; smarting in the parts, or delirium on the appearance of the menses, and especially if the discharge be dark colored, or attended with spasms, or if it appears too late, is scanty, or entirely suppressed.

Belladonna.—Is an important remedy in persons of a lymphatic temperament, or

of a plethoric habit. Mild temperament, with blue eyes, light hair, delicate skin, and especially if there be a tendency to a scrophulous enlargement of the glands.

Bryonia. - If the patient be of a nervous or dry, meagre, and bilious temperament; complexion dark, brown or black eyes and hair, irritability; with anxiety and inguinal; despair of being cured. congestion in the head or chest, with short cough, with frequent bleeding at the nose; acute, tractive, or rheumatic pains in the limbs during the catamenia, pressure and fulness in the epigastrium; coldness and frequent shivering; constipation. —

Amonia Carbonica. - Is peculiarly suited to scrophulous persons, of a sad, fearful humor, especially if the dysmenorrhœa is attended with swelling, itching, and

burning in the genital parts; or excoriation of the parts; or if the menses be premature and too copious, of a dark color, and acrid corrosive nature, or if there be colic and pain in the loins, during or immediately before the catamenia, with pressure in the uterus, cuttings, acute pullings in the back and in the genitals, with desire to lay down,
Calcaria Carbonica. - If the patient be of a plethoric or lymphatic constitution, with excessive dejection; great fatigue; pale yellow color of the face; or if there be congestion in the head, with dizziness and vertigo attended with Melancholy, and a disposition to weep, easily frightened, discouragement and fear of death, aversion to labor; especially if the dysmenorrhoea be attended with too

copious and premature catamenia; or if the breasts be swollen and painful with headache, colic and shivering before the Catamenia, or if there be cuttings in the abdomen, and cramp-like pains in the kidneys, with nausea during the catamenia: or if there be itching with inflammation and swelling of the uterus, or prolapsus uteri, with bearing down and an aching sensation in the vagina, particularly suited to scrophulous persons. it should not be given lower than the thirtieth attenuation, in a single dose, and that should be allowed to act without interruption.

Graphites. Is peculiarly adapted to cases of subacute inflammation of the ovaria, with leucorrhœa white and liquid like water before and after the Catamenia.

Finis.

